



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS –
MARKETING
AUBURN TOURISM

PRESENTED BY: LORRAINE CHACHERE, TOURISM
COORDIANATOR, MAYOR'S OFFICE OF ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

AUBURN TOURISM

YOU ARE INVITED

Our destination marketing efforts will be aimed to complement Auburn's economic development efforts by developing a stronger brand, efficient and strategic messaging, and by building a more positive perception of Auburn.

We have plenty of local gems, and we need your help in letting them shine!

ABOUT US

Auburn is a welcoming community nestled in a valley with just a 15 minute drive to the nearby international airport, SEA-TAC. Auburn is the land of two rivers, home to two nations with an amazing view of Mt. Rainier. Auburn has a population of 77,000 and growing, and includes two counties. Come learn more about us at ExploreAuburn.com

OUR NEEDS

Auburn Tourism could benefit from an integrated campaign to shape and promote our brand awareness, increase consumer engagement with our website during the trip planning stage, and change the perception of Auburn so that it is seen as an appealing destination to internal and external guests alike.

There are numerous Auburns scattered throughout the U.S. We need to emerge as a distinct city that emerges as an affordable city that offers big Pacific Northwest adventures.

Summer is a busy time in Auburn due to plentiful events and sunshine, with high occupancy levels at our seven hotels. The shoulder season from October – June could really use a big boost in our visitor count.

We would like for a 12 month proposal for a marketing plan to help us plan for our 2018 marketing campaign.

OUR TARGET AUDIENCE

- Potential Hotel Guests aimed for a 2-3 night stay
- An out of state market with a 2-3 flight duration on carriers with multiple daily flights into SEATAC
- Residents in the Seattle – Tacoma Region

OPPORTUNITY

The recent release of the *J.D. Power Destination Experience Satisfaction StudySM* which measures visitors' satisfaction with their destination experience across the top 50 destinations within the U.S., provided valuable insight on the visitor experience in Seattle (which included leisure and business travelers) and was an eye opener! Here is an [article](#) in The Seattle Times which delved into its findings.

With high hotel rates, Seattle is seen as too expensive. Visitors have caught on to our traffic woes. In our favor, we have lower ADRs at our hotels—even in the peak summer season that do not surpass the 2016 average nightly rate of \$193 in Seattle, according to data collected by Hotels.com.

Seattle was found to be the ninth-most expensive city to book a room by the Hotels.com folks. At a recent meeting, Visit Seattle reported that this summer season, Seattle downtown hotels were at 92% occupancy rates with an Average Daily Rate of \$392 (gulp!). Auburn can definitely benefit from the overflow of summer travelers if they know about us. We are on the Sounder Transit route to Seattle, so navigating traffic and expensive parking doesn't have to be an option for them. Auburn can certainly position itself as the basecamp for exploring the Puget Sound region.

BECOME OUR MARKETING GURU

We want you to create the strategy and messaging, manage the campaign, and identify the media buy budget needed for a successful campaign. The proposal shall detail the agency fees to develop a marketing plan which should include the following components in the Scope of Work:

Branding & Media Strategy:

- Put the finishing touches on our brand identity to showcase the city's assets and amenities compatible with our new tourism website and tourism videos.
- Generate awareness and visibility by telling our story, showcasing the experiences of Auburn to entice overnight stays.

Identify Market Segments & Propose Media Mix Using Traditional and Out of the Box Methods:

- Strategize, research, and identify market segments in which we can align our marketing efforts incorporating brand, website, and video accordingly.

Digital Marketing

- Design a campaign to help us to build brand awareness to local and regional markets with our existing assets (tourism videos and tourism website) to our target market.
- Manage digital advertising campaigns.
- Conduct a pay per click google words campaign.
- Utilize paid campaigns to drive traffic to custom website landing page
- Help us build our online presence for SEO.
- Market Research – Track website analytics and report on them regularly; track advertising success rates via click throughs, website landing pages, etc.

Paid Media Budget Development

- Increase destination awareness through paid advertising to key markets.
- Identify advertising methods and outlets that will garner maximum exposure with a limited budget to result in increased visits, hotel bookings.
- Effectively incorporate the branding and messaging, story pitch development of the campaigns to position Auburn as an ideal destination.

Media Relations

The main objective would be to curate stories about Auburn's attractions, events, and recreational activities that will be picked up by national and regional media with a focus on travel publications and outlets. We do not want to *advertise* in these publications, we wish to be *featured* in them.

Public Relations

Your help in building awareness of Auburn as a destination for visitors by creating a buzz about Auburn in the region about Auburn's positive attributes should result in stories and coverage in the Seattle – Tacoma DMA.

We need your expertise to create stronger connections between Auburn's primary tourism assets and develop new assets to attract more visitors to Auburn. As we continue to enhance the visitor experience, we want to promote what Auburn has to offer to play, stay, and explore.

FINANCING

The source of financing would be from the fund in which a hotel/motel tax is generated from each room reservation from all of Auburn's seven hotels. Collaborations with local organizations and city agencies are also a possibility.

The decision making process of the contract is based on a recommendation by the Auburn Tourism Board to the City of Auburn to finalize.

Our priorities will be dependent on cost as our budget is not unlimited and we wish to maximize our resources for the most effective outreach and performance. The time period for the initial strategizing and execution of the marketing campaigns will commence in January and run through December 2018. Throughout that time period and at the completion of the shoulder season, an assessment will be done to gauge the progress of the campaign and we look forward to open, direct, and continuous communication with you.

Our goal is to have multiple campaigns onwards with the collaboration and economic partnership with local stakeholders. Once they see the success and movement with this campaign, it will help us secure their commitment for future ones beyond 2018.

SEND PROPOSAL

Proposals/Bids can be sent electronically at Ichachere@auburnwa.gov

Or sent via mail to:

ATTN: Lorraine Chachere, Tourism Coordinator
City Hall
25 West Main Street
Auburn, WA 98001

Please note that should you opt to send via mail, the proposal should be **received** no later than **5:00PM on Wednesday, November 15th** and no late proposals/bids will be accepted.

TIMELINE REVIEW

	DATE	NOTES
RFP Invitation	RFPs sent.	
RFP Collection	Proposals and Bids are due no later than 5:00PM on Wednesday, November 15th.	Late proposals/bids will not be accepted.
Review	The Auburn Tourism Board will review proposals and bids received prior to the cutoff date and time.	
Presentation	Candidates that advance to the next round will be invited to present.	
Selection	The Auburn Tourism Board will decide the winning bid the third week of November 2017.	
Inauguration	We are looking to begin our new partnership in December for the preliminary meeting.	

CONCLUSION

We thank you for time and attention. We look forward to receiving and reviewing your proposal!